

A good Blessing to a publick Blessing

194. d. 10
A
SERMON

Preached before the

RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE

LORD-MAYOR,

AND

COURT of ALDERMEN,

And the severall

LIVERY COMPANIES

and the **CITY** of **LONDON,**

CITY of LONDON,

PARISH CHURCH of St. Lawrence Jewry,

On Friday the 29th of September, 1732.

BEING

The Day of the **ELECTION** of a **LORD-MAYOR** for
the Year ensuing.

By **JOHN MIDDLETON, D. D.** Lecturer of St. Bridges
London, and Chaplain to the **LORD-MAYOR.**

LONDON,

Printed for J. and J. BONWICKE, at the Red-Lyon in St. Paul's
Church-yard. MDCCXXXII.

C H I L D, Mayor.

*Curia Special' tenet in Festo Sancto
Michaelis Archi scil' Die Ve-
neris 29^o Die Septembris 1732.
Annoq; Regni Regis Georgii Se-
cundi Magnæ Britannia, &c.
Sexto.*

IT is Ordered that the Thanks of this Court be
given to the Reverend Dr. *Middleton*, for his Ser-
mon this Day preached before this Court, and the
Liveries of the several Companies of this City, at the
Parish Church of St. *Lawrence Jewry*, before the Ele-
ction of a LORD-MAYOR of this City for the Year
ensuing: And that he be desired to Print the same.



JACKSON.

To the RIGHT HONOURABLE
Sir *FRANCIS CHILD*, Knt.
LORD-MAYOR,

And to the WORSHIPFUL the
ALDERMEN
OF THE
CITY of LONDON,

THIS
SERMON,

Publisch'd at their Request,

Is with all Respect dedicated by

Their most obliged and

most obedient Servant,

Oct. 9, 1732.

JOHN MIDDLETON

arch
ations

To the Right Honourable
Sir FRANCIS GUTHRIE, Knt.
LORD MAYOR

And to the Worshipful the
ALDERMEN

OF THE
CITY of LONDON

THIS
SERMON

Published at their Request,

Is with all Fidelity translated by



Thomas Wright, Printer, and

Printed at the Press of the

1732

John Harrison

PROV. XXIX. 2.

The former Part of the Verse.

When the Righteous are in Authority, the People rejoice.

WHATEVER *Disputes* there have been, or may still be, concerning the Origin of Government, and the Authority by which it was at first establish'd; the Design and Usefulness of it has (I think) given occasion to *none*: All agreeing in this, that Government is necessary to the Support of Society: That we are indebted to its kindly Influence for the Safety of our Persons and Possessions, and all the Advantages of civil Life: That the condition of Mankind would, and must be, wretched without it. 'Tis impossible to conceive what Misery and Distraction would overrun the World, were Men left to themselves, without the awe of some common Power, without any Rule of Action but Appetite, without any Controuler but their own Wills. In such a state of Liberty no body could call any thing his own,

B

which

which his stronger or cunninger Neighbour had a mind to; Property would be determin'd altogether by Treachery or Violence, and publick Peace would be a thing unknown.

And as Society cannot stand without Government, so neither can Government without Law. For what is Government, but the Superiority of one or a few over the rest of a Community? And how does the Superiority of the former appear, but in framing and issuing out Directions for the Conduct of the latter? And wherein consists the Inferiority of the latter, but in their bounden Submission to such Directions? In a Word, these Directions are the Laws and Constitutions of the Society, to which every Member is obliged to conform his civil Behaviour.

But now, as is evident from Experience, bare Pre-scripts of such or such Actions and Restraints, void of proper Motives, will have little Influence upon disingenuous and refractory Minds; and therefore all wise Governours have ever enforced their Laws by threatening some Pain or Inconvenience to the Violators of them.

Well, but these Laws cannot execute themselves. Very true. From whence I infer somewhat is still wanting to make Government compleat, and effective of the Ends propos'd by it; and that is a Power to put the Law in force as oft as occasion shall require; a Power, when the Law is broken, to inflict the Penalty the Law has assign'd. Unless there be such a Power

Power, and unless such Power be exerted, the Law would be a dead Letter, without Life or Energy; its Threatnings would be little regarded, and its Authority less: But a steady impartial Execution of wholesome Laws, is the most likely Means of preserving and advancing the Peace and Happiness of Society.

From hence I argue, 'tis a Matter of the utmost Consequence in what Hands this Power is lodged: Should it be committed to indolent Men, who would *not* exercise it, then the Condition of the Subject would be no better than if there was no Law at all: Should it be entrusted with unfaithful Men, who would execute it *corruptly*, then the condition of the Subject would be worse; for in this Case the Law, which was design'd to prevent or redress Grievances, becomes its self the greatest Grievance, by ratifying Injuries with the Stamp of its Authority.

But happy for the Community, when this important Trust is found with wise and good Men; for then the Law will have free Course: Its Assistance will be always ready, and its Sentence always just: The Innocent may be confident of Protection, and the Guilty may expect the Punishment they deserve.

From this Induction it evidently follows, That *when the Righteous are in Authority the People have Reason to rejoice.*

Whether the Royal Author speaks here of Kings as supream, or of such as are sent by them, is no material Enquiry: Because what he asserts will hold good

in respect to both. However I shall beg Leave to confine his Observation to the latter, as being in that View more suitable to the Solemnity of this Day.

From the Words then I shall take occasion to consider,

I. *First*, What is imply'd in the Notion of a righteous Magistrate; or what Qualities, what Ingredients compound that amiable Character.

II. *Secondly*, What Influence such a Magistrate has, and must have, upon the publick Welfare.

I. *First* then, of all the Qualifications which are requisite to form, and to brighten, the Character of a good Magistrate, the Chief (I conceive) are these,

Courage, or Firmness of Mind, A publick Spirit, Integrity, and above all, A Zeal for Religion.

1. The first requisite I have mention'd is *Courage*. Unless the Magistrate be endued with this Quality his Administration will at best be irresolute and unstable.

Little pusillanimous Spirits in exalted Stations are liable to be made the Property of designing Men; intimidated by Threats or artful Insinuations of Danger, they are easily betray'd into Measures repugnant to their Professions, and perhaps to their Inclinations.

In the Absence of Courage Fear will always command; and what may not the Man be wrought upon to do, who is a Slave to Fear? He that is a Slave to his own Fears, must be a Slave to the Cunning and
Knavery

Knavery of every one, who has a Turn to serve by him, or upon him.

This is true of private Persons, much more of such as are in Authority. Their Province furnishes them with the Power of doing a great deal of good, or a great deal of harm; of strengthening or defeating the wicked Policies of a corrupt Age; and therefore they are *sure* to have Temptations thrown in their way; and if they have a faint Heart (tho' they have an honest Mind) they are *as sure* to fall.

Courage or a resolute Mind is necessary in a Magistrate, if it be only to balance the Force of Good-Nature and Complaisance; which otherwise would be apt to lead him astray out of *Popularity*; and induce him, for fear of doing a hard thing (as we say) to do, or to connive at, that which is unjust.

In a Word, this Quality must guard all his other Vertues: Without it his Honour would fail him, his Probity would be precarious, and even Religion in some Exigencies would call for his Assistance in vain.

2. The next Accomplishment of a good Magistrate is a *publick Spirit*: By which I mean such a noble and generous Disposition, as makes him deaf to Flattery, and blind to all mean and selfish Views; such an excellent Principle as directs all his Consultations and Endeavours to one point *chiefly*, and that is the common Benefit. If his own Interest, or the Interest of
a Friend

a Friend coincides with this, well; if not, a good Magistrate will neither alter his Measures, nor slacken his Zeal: The Publick shall be served at all Adventures; and it shall be served out of Inclination as well as out of Duty.

The brave Spirit (I am speaking of) binds the Magistrate more closely to the Society over which he presides, than his Office: His Office sets him at the Head of it, but this publick Spirit makes him its cordial Friend: His Office lays an Obligation upon him to regard the Welfare of those committed to his Care, but this generous Temper makes him *actually* solicitous for, and pleased to solicit, the common Good.

The People have more to hope for from the publick Spirit of their Governour, than from his Authority. His Authority may be abused, or the Obligations arising from it may be neglected; but every one gladly follows the Inclinations of his own Mind: Especially when Duty and Inclination lead the same way.

What then can better adorn a publick Character, what can render it more useful, than a publick Spirit? This does *voluntarily*, what Sense of Duty can hardly constrain; this esteems that to be delightful, which is a burden to Indolence and Cowardice: This freely sacrifices *that*, to which Covetousness sacrifices every thing else, I mean private Advantage.

When

When Covetousness (the opposite to this noble Spirit) is set on high, and fills the Ruler's Seat, what bad Effects are not to be dreaded from it?

Covetousness is a Principle so engrossing, that it will have the whole Sway: And withal so absolute, that it will be obey'd; nothing can stand with it, or against it: It is (as the Apostle speaks) the *Root of all Evil*, especially in the breast of the Magistrate; for there it will infallibly be the Measure of Right and Wrong, and will make the Scale incline, not to the Advantage of Truth, but to its own.

When Right and Profit interfere and draw contrary ways, all the little Arts of Craft and Sophistry will be used to save Appearances: But however the Man may be embarrass'd in his Management on these Occasions, the Event will shew him true to his *reigning* Principle, which is, to get what he can in spite of Honour and Conscience, in spite of the Orphan's Cries, or the Widow's Tears.

3. The next Qualification necessary for Persons invested with Authority, is Uprightness or *Integrity*.

By an upright Magistrate is meant one who is superior, not only to the Temptations of sordid Gain, but also to the low Suggestions of Vain-glory, of personal Pique, and personal Affection, and of all other Prejudices, which are apt to sway and bear down unsteady Men, and to suborn them to reproachful Deeds. One, who laying aside Enmity and

and Friendship and Party-Zeal gives *equal* Judgment, determin'd altogether by the Merits and Evidence of the Cause before him, not regarding on whom the Acquittal, on whom the Disgrace may fall.

His first and full Purpose is to do right; and from this Purpose he will never knowingly recede: He may be deceiv'd, but he will not be perverted: His Tongue may err, but his Heart shall be irreprovable: His Sentence thro' the wicked Arts of others may be wrong, but his honest Intention, his Desire that Truth may prevail, all shall see, and all shall admire.

Integrity is a Principle, which will keep the Magistrate free from all *manner* of Bias; which will suffer no sinister Regards of any kind to defile the Judgment Seat.

Whoever therefore shall exercise the Powers committed to him, moved by Favour or Resentment, or by any other Prejudice, (tho' his Hands should be unpolluted with Bribes) has no Claim to this laudable Character. Because such a one perverts Judgment, tho' he gets nothing by it; He is partial, tho' he be not mercenary; and judicial Partiality is highly injurious to the Publick, and therefore must fasten a foul Imputation upon the Judge.

We are apt to exclaim, with Indignation enough, against the Person, that shall make Merchandise of
 2 personal

personal Honour and publick Trust: That for a Place or a Pension shall turn short on a sudden, and act counter to his former Maxims and Professions, engaging warmly in Measures, which heretofore he as warmly condemn'd.

Why truly the Infamy of this Wretch is great, and all the Reproaches he meets with are just. But let not that Man be forward to *cast a Stone* at him, who has done the same Thing upon Motives, different indeed, but not less inglorious. The latter perchance has refused the Wages of Unrighteousness, because Avarice happen'd not to be his Foible: But if he has given up his Integrity to some other Appetite, which he was fonder of gratifying, wherein is he to be justified rather than the former? Have they not both alike departed from the Duty and Dignity of their Character? Have not their Fellow-Subjects been aggriev'd *equally* by both?

4. The last Qualification which I mention'd of a good Magistrate (tho' first in Value and Obligation) is *a Zeal for Religion*.

And this Zeal is to be shewn in the first Place by his *own* Example in the Practice of Virtue, and attending the external Ordinances of Religion: Because to pretend a Concern for Religion without a Conformity of Manners is *but* Pretence, and tends to bring both the Man and his Profession into Contempt. Every one will conclude the former to be a Hypocrite;

God and his Word

and vulgar Minds for *that* Reason will be apt to go a Step farther; and to conclude the latter to be a Cheat.

Virtue is *absolutely* necessary in a Magistrate: He should be free (if possible) from the Imputation of every Vice, because he will be frequently called upon in the Course of his Office to chastise *it* in others. But with what Face can he be severe upon any Guilt, of which he is conscious himself? Besides what good Effect can be expected from such aukward Discipline? The Intent of Punishment is to create an Abhorrence of Vice: But now a vicious Magistrate defeats this Intent; because his private Example bespeaks his inward Approbation of that, which in his publick Capacity he is forced to disclaim: So that his Inflictions can work no good upon Offenders; they may give Smart to their Bodies, but will never reform their Minds.

But a good Magistrate (besides his personal Piety) will use his *Authority*, and all the Influence which his high Station can supply, to vindicate the Honour of Religion.

This is a Debt of Gratitude to God, who has *anointed him with the Oyl of Gladness above his Fellows*. The Honour of Religion is the Honour of God; therefore does Religion challenge *their* special Countenance and Protection, whom his Providence has set on high; for is it not fit they should honour God, whom God has honour'd?

Again,

Again, the Magistrate should cherish Religion for his own Sake.

Religion represents the Magistrate in an awful and venerable Light, adorn'd with a divine Commission, and arm'd with divine Power; from hence is derived his Glory: And it requires Obedience to him on Pain of Damnation; from hence arises his Security. But now take away Religion; and the Splendor of the Magistrate will be greatly diminish'd, his Authority will stand upon a narrow and unequal Foundation, and the strongest Tye on the Subject's Part to Reverence and Submission will be dissolved.

Furthermore it behooves the Magistrate to espouse the Cause of Religion (I mean the Christian) against all Impugners of it, the Immoral, the Infidel, and Blasphemer, for this important Reason; because it tends above all other Schemes to exalt the Grandeur and Felicity of a Nation; by drawing down the Blessing of God upon it, and by inculcating such Duties, the Practice of which, in the Nature of the Thing, must beget and establish the common Peace.

Suppose Christianity to be false; yet would it deserve the Favour of the Civil Powers for the Sake of its wise and benign Laws, admirably adapted to the Good of particular Persons and of publick Bodies: And upon this Score they ought to be treated as incendiaries, who labour to subvert it; unless they

have something as good or better to substitute in its room.

Our modern Infidels indeed are so kind as to offer us a Religion (as they say) far better; and that is the Religion of Nature, or of Right Reason.

But before we make this Change, I would beg Leave to ask these Gentlemen, *Whose* Right Reason is to supply the Place of Revealed Religion? Perhaps they will answer in *great Modesty*, their own. Very well: Then I would farther ask, Is *their* Right Reason to be the Religion of the whole Community? If it be, pray, how will our Condition be better than it is now? Shall we not be still attach'd to an imposed national Religion? And what will become of their darling Topicks of Free-Thinking, and absolute Liberty in Matters of Conscience? Should it be said every individual is to be guided by his own Reason; then I am afraid we should have no Religion at all; or (which is as bad as none) as many Religions as Men: For in this Situation every Man's prevailing Foible would be *his* Reason (that is to say) his Religion. The poor Man's Reason would judge it very unfit that one should have Superfluities, and another want; and so his Religion to be sure would prohibit all Enclosures: The intemperate Man's Reason would prescribe an unlimited Freedom in the Use of carnal Pleasures; and the revengeful Man's Reason would tell him he had a Right to his Enemy's Blood. Thus

would

would the Light of Nature (without any help from Revelation) undoubtedly mislead us, thus would it open the way to Error and Confusion.

To return to Christianity: If that be true, if it be truly divine, and truly divine it is, (if there be or can be any such thing as historical Truth,) then those Rulers and Governors, who shall betray, or not promote, its Interest, must be false to themselves, false to their Countrey, false to their God.

From what has been hitherto discoursed concerning the Qualifications necessary to form a good Magistrate, 'tis easy to deduce the Duty of all such as shall be called to publick Offices of Dignity, and Trust, and Power: 'Tis easy and natural to conclude they must be obliged to acquire and exercise those Virtues, with which they may do a great deal of good, and without which they can do none; without which their Characters would be ignominious, and their Administrations hurtful.

This is a Point so obvious, that it requires no Proof or Illustration: Pass I on therefore to my

H. *Second* General, under which I proposed to shew the Influence which a good Magistrate has and must have upon the publick Welfare.

It were easy to demonstrate from the usual Order of Providence, and from the natural Tendency of Things, that a Magistrate, adorn'd with the Qualities
above

above mention'd, must contribute largely to the Happiness of the Community, and diffuse Joy and Gladness among the People.

The Advantages which arise from Government in general (which without Magistracy cannot subsist) are so many Arguments in Proof of this Point.

Even a *defective Constitution*, where the Laws may be exceptionable, and the Administration committed to weak and wicked Hands, is a *Blessing* compared to a State of Anarchy; because the very Name of Laws, and the Poms and Solemnities of Tribunals will have weight; and restrain some Men from such Actions as will make them obnoxious to certain Penalties; tho' such Penalties are not always and equally required. Besides it may be presumed the Number of those who shall be benefited by the *ordinary* Influence of Government, will be greater than of those who shall suffer thro' the Ignorance or Partiality of particular Governors.

Indeed it is far better, when under a well digested Establishment wholesome Laws meet with a regular Execution; for then Government appears in perfect Beauty; and the good Effects of it spread far and wide, and are *universally* seen and felt. *Happy are the People that are in such a Case; yea blessed are the People, whose Senators are wise, and whose Magistrates are just.*

Happy

Happy the People! Because in this Situation they are sure of all the Protection in their Rights and Possessions, which the Law and the Ministers of the Law can give them: Happy! Because they may sit under their own Vine and under their own Fig-Tree, and lay them down to Rest without Fear or Dread; as knowing, if they should be invaded, the Invader would receive exemplary Rebuke, and themselves ample Redress from the Tribunals of Justice: Happy! Because they may expect a fair Decision of their Civil Controversies, forasmuch as they must be refer'd to *able Men, such as fear God, Men of Truth, hating Covetousness.*

Happy the Publick! Because, when Things are upon such a Footing, 'tis more than probable, the Enemies of its Peace will decrease daily. The Disturbers of the publick Peace are the Vicious of every kind; some of which (not entirely abandon'd) may be reclaim'd, when they see there is no escaping the Vigilance, no imposing on the Understanding, no biasing the Integrity of those, who bear the Sword for the Punishment of Evil Doers. Others grown incorrigible are sure to be taken out of the Way of doing more Mischief, and corrupting the yet Innocent, by a Sentence either of Banishment or Death.

Moreover the personal *Example* of a good Magistrate does not a little promote the publick Happiness and Tranquillity; allowing (and sure it cannot be deny'd)

ny'd) that it is for the publick Happiness and Tranquillity to have Vice beaten out of its strong Holds, and the Influence of Virtue enlarg'd.

Now the Example of the Magistrate goes a great Way towards bringing these Things to pass: For it gives a Lustre and Reputation to Virtue, and these recommend it powerfully to general Practice. When Men of Eminence and Authority lead the Way, the Crowd will follow for Fashion-sake; and will do *that* upon the Spur of Vanity, which Law and Conscience shall require of them in vain.

On the other Side, Vice set on high, cultivated by an ample Fortune, and strengthen'd by Power, will infallibly shed its baneful Influence upon those below; who are too well prepared to take in the Infection, being ever fond of treading in the Steps, and imitating the Practices of their Superiors.

Besides, many there are, whom nothing restrains from Lewdness and other Immoralities but the Dread of *that* Scandal and Reproach which usually attend them: But when thro' frequent and *great* Examples this Restraint is taken away, and Immorality ceases to be infamous, what remains to hinder these Men from being wicked without Measure, when they may be wicked without Shame?

To conclude this Head: If *Righteousness exalteth a Nation* both naturally and providentially: If the Honour and Safety and Well-being of a People depend upon

upon their Adherence to Virtue and Religion; and if Virtue and Religion (the Foundation of civil and spiritual Happiness) abounds more and more thro' the Means of a pious and upright Magistrate, then it manifestly follows that such a Magistrate is a publick Blessing, that he contributes largely to the publick Prosperity, and gives just Occasion to the publick Joy.

Permit me now to make a short Remark upon what has been said under this Head; and then I will dismiss you with the Benediction of God.

Since so much results from the Conduct of a good Magistrate: Since he is the Instrument of conveying so many Benefits to the Community over which he presides; what Returns of Obedience and Respect must be due, (nay what may not be expected) from the People under him? Since they *enjoy great Quietness, and many worthy Deeds are done, thro' his Providence,* they ought to accept it always and in all Places with all Thankfulness.

Obedience indeed is due to the *bare Authority* of a lawful Magistrate; and the People must submit for Wrath, if they will not for Conscience Sake. And the *Ceremonies* and *outward Marks* of Reverence must go along with their Obedience, and attend the Person of him who has the Rule over them.

But when this Obedience and this Reverence are to be paid, where they are claim'd by Power only, and not by Merit, they are always awkward, constrain'd

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and altogether external; and many shall honour the *Magistrate* with their Lips, and at the same Time curse the *Man* with their Heart.

Respect like a heavy Tax comes grudgingly from an oppressed People: But to one who has discharged his high Trust wisely, conscientiously, 'tis the Subject's Free-will Offering; an Indication, not so much of their Subjection, as of their Gratitude and their Joy.

Power may beget Fear; and extort the *Formalities* of a submissive and honourable Regard: But Power of itself has nothing in it to engage the Love or real *Esteem* of those who are subject to it.

But Power, directed by Discretion and Fortitude, by Justice and Piety; and adorn'd with Affability, Condescension and Easiness of Access, never fails to recommend itself to the good Opinion, to the Admiration, to the Affection of all within its Verge: The Ear that hears it, shall bless it, and the Eye that sees it, shall give Witness to it.

Of the lovely Qualities just mention'd some serve to soften that Fear (which is due to Pre-eminence and Authority) into Love; others to compound that Love and that Fear into an unfeign'd and chearful Veneration.

So that there seems no need to press the Duty of obeying and reverencing *gracious* and *beneficent* Governours: This is an Obligation readily comply'd with; 'tis a Tribute voluntarily offer'd; a willing and pleasurable

surable Task it is to give Honour to whom Honour is eminently due. Whoever complains of the want of this Tribute, may be presum'd (for the most Part) to want those endearing Qualities which seldom or never go without it.

To conclude: 'Tis an agreeable Reflexion, very agreeable to me, that I have been addressing my Discourse to those, who have happily *seen* the *Righteous in Authority*, and have *felt* the kindly Effects of a prudent and equal Administration; who have seen Mercy and Truth, Integrity, Candor and Condescension all met together, and kissing each other, in the Seat of Power: Who have seen the Government of this renown'd City committed to such Hands, as have made the Ensigns of Honour more honourable, and added new Lustre to the illustrious Chair. May this venerable Chair be always so worthily filled: May all that shall hereafter ascend to it, descend from it with *equal Glory*.

To close all: May this City be as happy, as she is great: May *Peace be within her Walls, and Plenteousness within her Palaces*: May her *Houses be safe from Fear* and from Fire: May *there be no Decay, no leading into Captivity, and no complaining in her Streets; and may that God (who loveth Righteousness and hateth Iniquity) be her God for ever and ever.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Duty and Excellence of Thanksgiving. A Sermon preach'd before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London, at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, on Friday May 29. 1730. being the Anniversary of the Restoration of King Charles II. By John Middleton, D. D. Lecturer of St. Beides, London. Publish'd at the Request of the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs. Printed for J. Bonwicke, at the Red-Lyon in St. Pauls Church-Yard.

Where may be had
Judgment and Justice the solid Foundation of human Happiness. A Sermon preach'd before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London, at the Parish Church of St. Lawrence Jewry, on Tuesday September 29, 1730. Before the Election of the Lord Mayor for the Year ensuing. By James Knight, D. D. Vicar of St. Sepulchres, London.

